

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1- 23. (Canceled)

24. (Currently Amended) A method for creating valid postage labels for use on mail pieces, comprising:

monitoring a location of mail pieces in a high-speed letter processing system;

calculating a postage amount due for each of the mail pieces;

creating valid postage labels associated with each of the mail pieces before the mail pieces arrive at a location comprising a postage indicium applicator;

printing, by a printer on blank labels, the valid postage labels comprising postage indicia corresponding to the postage amount calculated for the mail pieces and comprising images, wherein each of the postage indicia is associated with a particular one of the mail pieces, and wherein said images of at least two of the valid postage labels are not identical;

applying, by said high-speed letter processing system, the valid postage labels to the associated mail pieces wherein no human readable portions of said valid postage labels display permit information and wherein the valid postage labels display a postage amount in an increment that is available from the delivery service, whereby said associated mail pieces have an appearance of a mail item comprising a postage stamp that was obtained from a delivery service and was applied by hand; and

coordinating the operation of the postage indicium applicator and the location of the mail pieces to ensure that the correct valid postage labels are applied to each envelope.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24 further comprising:
monitoring the quality of the valid postage labels to ensure that the proper postage valid postage labels were printed.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24 further comprising:
monitoring the quality of the mail pieces to ensure that the valid postage labels have been properly applied.

27. (Original) The method of claim 24 further comprising:
monitoring the quality of the mail pieces to ensure that the postage indicia represents a proper postage amount.

28. (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein the calculating step further comprises:

determining a destination for a mail piece; and
calculating the postage amount based upon the destination of the mail piece.

29. (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein the calculating step further comprises:

determining a weight for a mail piece; and
calculating the postage amount based upon the weight of the mail piece.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24 wherein each of the postage indicia are associated with a mail piece that is designated for a particular recipient, and wherein the each of the valid postage labels comprise an image, wherein the image is selected based upon one or more characteristics of the associated particular recipient.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31 wherein the one or more characteristics of the recipient are selected from the group consisting of:

the recipient's age;
the recipient's sex;
the recipient's occupation; and
the recipient's location.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24 wherein the blank labels comprise a roll of blank labels that are printed in series.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24 wherein the blank labels comprise a sheet of blank labels.

35. (Canceled)

36. (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein the blank labels comprise a serial number.

37. (Original) The method of claim 36 further comprising:
verifying that the serial number is valid.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 wherein the printed postage indicia includes the serial number.

39. (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein the printing step further comprises:

receiving label stock having a pre-printed serial number, the pre-printed serial number including a master serial number;

generating postage indicia using the master serial number, pre-printed serial number, and required request; and

printing the postage indicia on the label stock.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24 further comprising:
verifying that the correct valid postage labels are applied to each mail piece.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24 wherein each of the valid postage labels comprise an image and each of the images is selected based on recipient characteristics of a particular one of the mail pieces.

42. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

creating a machine generated postage stamp, by a high speed mail item computer processing system, said creating including:

receiving, by the high speed mail item computer processing system, information associated with each of a plurality of the mail pieces, wherein the high speed mail item computer processing system determines a postage amount for each postage indicia to be printed based on the information; and

printing, by a printer, said machine generated postage stamp including a postage indicium and an image, wherein the postage indicium is associated with a particular one of the plurality of mail pieces and bears at least the determined postage amount, and wherein the image is selected based on characteristics of a recipient of the particular one of the plurality of mail pieces; and

affixing the machine generated postage stamp to the mail pieces to provide mail pieces processed by the high speed mail item computer processing system that have the appearance of a mail piece comprising a postage stamp that was obtained from a delivery service and was applied by hand, wherein the machine generated postage stamp is ~~at least~~ two separate labels appearing to be ~~at least~~ two different postage stamps which display postage amounts in increments that are offered by the delivery service and the ~~at least~~ two postage amounts displayed by the ~~at least~~ two separate labels total at least the determined postage amount.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42 wherein at least two of the machine generated postage stamp bear different images and different postage amounts.

44. (Canceled)

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42 wherein no human readable portions of said valid postage labels display permit information.

46-50. (Canceled)